



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Minneapolis VA Health Care System  
One Veterans Drive  
Minneapolis, MN 55417**



**Joint VA/DoD Collaborative Telemedicine Intensive Care Unit**

In a groundbreaking collaboration between the Department of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA), the Telemedicine Intensive Care Unit (Tele-ICU) located at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center will be used to continuously monitor and assist in the care of critically-ill active duty service members. VA telemedicine staff will provide back-up care for patients in Military Treatment Facilities at five US Air Force Bases around the country.

The Tele-ICU system spreads the expertise of ICU physician specialists and critical care nurses to hospitals wherever that expertise is needed. Tele-ICU specialists have the patient's clinical and electronic data at their fingertips with 24/7 video monitoring available at the patient's bedside when local medical staff need the additional support.

"Critically ill patients can receive rapid access to a critical care physician with the full range of electronic data immediately available, at the press of a button," said Robert Bonello, MD, medical director of the Central VA ICU Telemedicine System, a regional initiative developed by the VA Midwest Health Care Network, also known as Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 23). Implemented in 2011, the initiative now projects Intensive Care clinical expertise wherever it is needed within a growing system of 160 ICU beds in 13 VA Medical Centers across nine states. It was the first Tele-ICU system centered in Minnesota, and the first of its kind in the VA.

The collaborative effort is supported by the DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, also known as the Joint Incentive Fund (JIF), authorized by Congress as part of the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act. The intent of the JIF is to facilitate mutually beneficial exchanges of health care resources between DoD and VA, with the goal of improving access to high quality and cost effective health care. Mr. Brian McCarty, the DoD's executive program manager for this JIF said that "this project will improve both quality and safety of care for Air Force and VA patients while simultaneously insuring that the right clinical expertise is available at the right time and at the right location – the perfect JIF project." JIF funding is designed to cover the start-up costs during the initial two-year financial support period. This project is the first DoD-VA Tele-ICU collaboration.

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